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## **Advisory Announcement**

*For Immediate Release: Tuesday, Aug 25, 2020*

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### **Fortymile Caribou Hunt on Steese Highway and White Mountains to Close Friday**

(Tok, Alaska) – The State of Alaska fall registration hunt (RC860) for Fortymile caribou in Zone 1, accessible from the Steese Highway and Chena Hot Springs Road, and in Zone 4 (White Mountains) will close on Friday, August 28, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. State hunting seasons for Fortymile caribou opened on August 10 in all zones.

Caribou harvest Zones 1 and 4 in the first 19 days of the season is expected to meet the quota of 4,000 caribou for those zones. The state hunting season is scheduled to remain open in Zones 2 and 3.

Caribou are abundant in Zone 2 (located in roadless portions of Game Management Units 20B, 20D north of the Tanana River, and western Unit 20E) and widely scattered in Zone 3 (Taylor Highway area in a part of Unit 20E). ADF&G staff will be monitoring the hunt carefully to minimize chances that the quota is exceeded in these zones.

Caribou movements during fall are largely unpredictable, and seasons may be closed in other zones to keep the harvest within the harvest quota. Hunters are advised to call the Fortymile Caribou Hotline at 907-267-2310 before departing for the field to obtain the most current information on status of the hunt. Hunters must obtain the RC860 registration permit before hunting caribou in these areas.

The fall bag limit for residents is two caribou (either-sex). Residents may harvest two caribou, provided they have a separate RC860 permit for each caribou. The nonresident bag limit remains one bull caribou.

These changes only apply to state caribou hunts in these areas. The federal caribou hunt on federal lands is not affected by these changes. Hunters with questions about federal subsistence regulations should call (800) 478-1456.

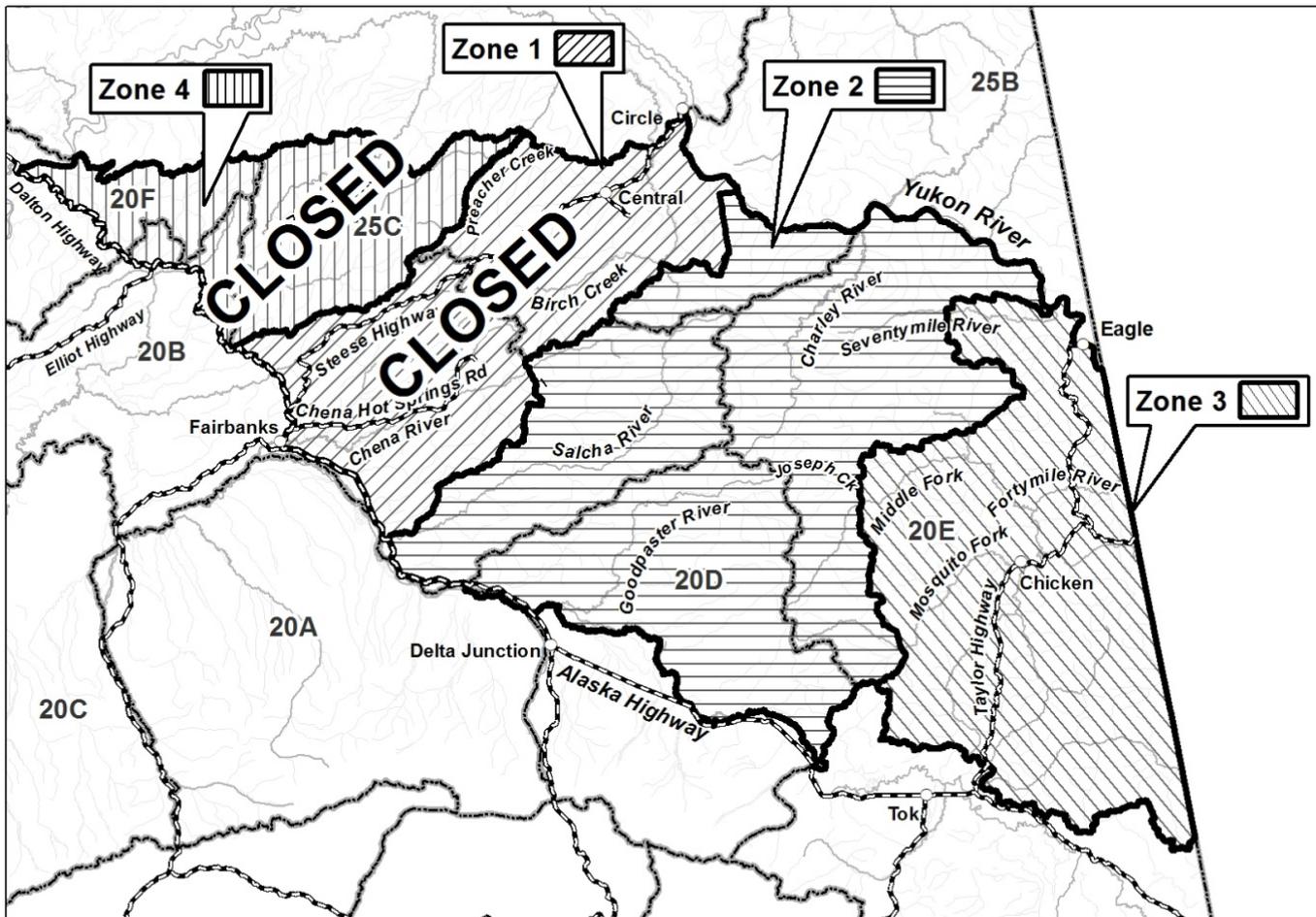
Successful hunters must report within three days of the kill online at (<http://hunt.alaska.gov>), by phone (883-2971) or in person at the ADF&G office in Tok. Hunters who report by phone must also mail their permit reports or drop them off to the Tok ADF&G office. Unsuccessful hunters must return their reports to the Tok office or report online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> by October 15.

Hunters are urged to obtain a receipt when they turn in their hunt reports or to mail them by delivery confirmation receipt. Permit holders who fail to report will not be allowed to obtain registration, drawing, or tier I and II permits next year, and may be cited for a violation of the Alaska hunting regulations.

Based on nutritional indices and population modeling using survival and birth rates, the Fortymile caribou herd has likely declined from its peak population size of about 80,000 in 2017 due to reduced nutritional status caused by overgrazing of its range. The Fortymile herd began showing signs of reduced nutritional status as it

approached and exceeded 50,000 caribou. To decrease the potential for additional long-term impacts to the range, the current management goal is to quickly reduce the herd to a size that will allow the nutritional condition to improve. Once the fall hunt is over, the department will reassess the herd's nutritional condition before setting the winter harvest quota.

Hunters should be aware of local ordinances and restriction aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19. Please respect any local restrictions, wear face coverings and practice social distancing when in communities in or near the hunt area. Hunters may want to call ahead to find out if local communities have supplies available for sale.



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